



Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Modern Slavery Act receives Royal Assent

Tomorrow the Modern Slavery Bill will receive Royal Assent and become the Modern Slavery Act – the UK's first major new piece of anti-slavery legislation for over 200 years reflecting the sad fact that slavery has been allowed to come back, change and flourish and today traps up to 13,000 people in slavery and servitude in the UK. Slavery was abolished but never eradicated, the Act is our chance to change this.

Unseen warmly welcomes the Act and congratulates the government in bringing forth a landmark piece of legislation that will further improve the fight against the terrible crimes of modern slavery and trafficking.

Andrew Wallis CEO comments: "Whilst no legislation is ever perfect it must now be matched by a concerted and collaborative effort to put the provisions of this law into full effect".

"Many have contributed to the process of drafting this legislation and we have arrived at an Act that the UK can and should be proud of. There is and always will be more to be done but it was crucial that this legislation reached the statute books before this parliament ended so that we have a good foundation upon which to build."

"We are pleased that our involvement with the Centre for Social Justice and leading the 'It Happens Here' report was recognised by the Home Secretary as a catalyst for government action. The report identified the need for primary legislation, an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, better protection for victims, a comprehensive strategic review and Transparency in Supply Chains. All of these elements being enshrined in the Modern Slavery Act shows the government's intention to effectively tackle this issue".

"We particularly welcome the Transparency in Supply Chains Clause in the Act as this will for the first time engage businesses in the collective fight to end Modern Slavery. This clause will require large companies to report what they are doing to ensure slavery does not exist in their supply chains or business practices and will have global reach."

We look forward to continuing to work with Government, its agencies and the rest of the sector to develop and implement the policies needed to ensure this Act is effectively implemented.

Unseen is a charity that helps survivors of human trafficking by providing a 24/7 safe-houses where they can rebuild their lives. The charity also trains frontline staff, such as police and health workers, to identify victims and works with government and the EU at a strategic level to shape policy and take effective action.

For more information please go to www.unseenuk.org or e-mail admin@unseenuk.org or call 07507 966 196

Note for editors

Unseen

- Unseen began in 2008.
- Figures released for 2014 by the National Crime Agency states there were 2,340 reported potential victims of human trafficking victims in the UK, including 671 children – a 34% increase

on 2013's figures. However, the Home Office estimates there are between 10-13,000 victims of Modern Slavery in the UK.

- Unseen's WATER (Women's Anti-Trafficking Emergency Refuge) project is the only safe-house in the South West and is one of only three services in the country offering 24/7 support to victims of human trafficking.
- For women who have left the safety of our WATER project, we also offer a resettlement service to help them continue on their journey of recovery within their chosen community. This project is supported by the Commissioner's Community Action Fund awarded by the Police Community Trust. The Commissioner's Community Action Fund was set up by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset to tackle ASB, domestic and sexual violence, burglary and provide support for victims of crime.
- Unseen runs a [Room Sponsorship Scheme](#) for people to directly support women survivors at our WATER project.
- Unseen is currently working towards opening the UK's first [specialist accommodation project for child victims of modern slavery](#).
- The charity was instrumental in setting up an [Anti-Slavery Partnership](#) with Avon & Somerset Police and Bristol City Council, which brings together 22 agencies in fighting human trafficking in the South West, including other NGOs and local government.

The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery.

The Fund is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK. Since its inception in 2004 we have awarded close to £6bn.

The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.

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